

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:WBCOOTE:CRJ

APPROVED BY AF:EWMULCAHY

H:MR. RICHARDSON (INFO)

PM: MR. MCCLINTOCK

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR MASS ET US

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON ETHIOPIA

1. ACTING ASST SECY MULCAHY TESTIFIED MARCH 5 IN OPEN HEARING BEFORE NEWLY ESTABLISHED SUB-COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS OF HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. CHAIRMAN OF SUB-COMMITTEE DANTE FASCELL (D-FLA.) PRESIDED. OTHER PARTICIPATING CONGRESSMEN WERE BIESTER (R-PA.), ROSENTHAL (D-N.Y.) AND RIEGLE (D-MICH.). AMONG SPECTATORS WERE ETHIOPIAN CHARGE MEKBIB, WHO HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY OF MULCAHY'S TESTIMONY, AND SEVERAL ERITREAN STUDENTS.

2. IN HIS PREPARED STATEMENT, COPY OF WHICH AMB. HUMMEL IS CARRYING TO ADDIS, MULCAHY GAVE DETAILED BACKGROUND OF SITUATION IN ERITREA, OUTLINED U.S. INTERESTS IN ETHIOPIA AND STRESSED OUR TRADITIONAL CLOSE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TIES WITH ETHIOPIA. WHILE REITERATING POINTS WHICH SECRETARY MADE TO PRESS LAST WEEK THAT ETHIOPIAN REQUEST WAS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION BUT FINAL DECISION NOT YET

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TAKEN, MULCAHY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT CESSATION OR SEVERE

REDUCTION OF AID IN ETHIOPIA'S HOUR OF NEED COULD HAVE
HIGHLY UNFAVORABLE EFFECT ON OUR LONGSTANDING RELATIONS
WITH GOVERNMENT OF THIS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED COUNTRY.

3. TENOR OF QUESTIONING WAS FRIENDLY AND INDICATED SUPPORT
IN VARYING DEGREES FROM SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR CONTINU-

ING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA, INCLUDING AT
LEAST LIMITED POSITIVE RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR AMMUNITION
RE SUPPLY. CONGRESSMAN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WAY MIGHT BE
FOUND TO BRING PRESENT CRISIS TO NEGOTIATING TABLE WITH
HOPEFULLY, RESULTANT PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

4. ALTHOUGH CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL IS NOT NECESSARY FOR
CASH PURCHASES OF LESS THAN DOLS 25 MILLION, WITH HEAR-
INGS COMING UP SHORTLY ON BASIC SECURITY ASSISTANCE
REQUESTS IN FOREIGN AID BILL, DEPT CONSIDERED IT IM-
PORTANT TO BE AS RESPONSIVE AS POSSIBLE TO EXPRESSED
CONGRESSIONAL DESIRE FOR INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC ETHIO-
PIAN PROBLEM. CHAIRMAN FASCELL SAID HE WAS MOST APPRE-
CIATIVE OF DEPT AN- DOD ACTION IN CONSULTING WITH CON-
GRESSIONAL COMMITTEES, ADDING THAT IT WAS MUCH TO CREDIT
OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO KEEP CONGRESS INFORMED ON COMPLEX,
FUNDAMENTAL DECISION SUCH AS THIS. INGERSOLL

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